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ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning encompasses those experiences in any setting, nurtured by any motivation, which improve capabilities for developing one's personality and for integrating one's lifestyle with the human, natural, and social environments in which one chooses to live. Some predicted changes will challenge those interested in lifelong learning. The population will be composed of increased numbers of older adults, blacks, handicapped with greater mobility, and females; the family will lose traditional responsibilities to other institutions and be more affected by higher divorce and remarriage rates; the concepts of work, time, and leisure and amount and type of work and leisure time will alter; and there will be less mobility. Taking these predictions into account, the target population of lifelong learning must be viewed as consisting of young adults, middle-aged housewives, and retirees. To serve learners' purposes, teachers need not be professional educators. The content of educational experience should not be simply an extension of formal schooling, and the location need not always be an institution. Opportunities for learning must not be limited by temporal frames. A better, broader spectrum for lifelong learning can be achieved by fostering a more positive attitude, developing skills and appreciations early in life, being participating members of the community, being a friend of technology, and becoming involved in cooperating and coordinating efforts. (YLB)

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Life-Long Learning: An Overview
by

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for

National Music Educators' Conference

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
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Good morning, and it is a good morning when any segment of our professional educators' population focuses on integration of their talents and special expertise with the overall, basic, "pie in the sky" aim of education - the full development of the potential of every human being regardless of age, race, socio-economic status or other considerations.

Let me begin by telling you about my ten year old nephew. On his first trip to summer camp, he sent home a card which said,

"Dear Daddy,

I love you. I hope you live all your life."

It's that sentiment that we echo here today. How can we arrange our resources, human, natural, and material, so that each of us can truly live to the fullest all of our lives? We are really talking about learning, at every stage of our life, which will allow us to lead satisfying, productive existences which will improve our lot without devastating any one else's.

We get caught up in the spider's web of conflicting terminology. So often we put time and space frames on such words as education, as if all education must be encased in formalized organization, sturdy school buildings, structured classes, and stamps of approval in grades or degrees by pedigreed pedagogues.

I firmly believe that life-long learning encompasses those experiences in any setting, nurtured by any motivation, which improve a person's capabilities for developing his personality and for integrating his lifestyle with the human, natural, and social environments with which he chooses to live. If you accept that frame of reference, then you are definitely a part of the life-long learning challenge.

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In November of 1980, in preparation for input into the 1981 White House Conference on Aging, a mini-conference on Life-Long Learning for Self-Sufficiency was convened in Racine, Wisconsin. The conferees' change of focus from life-long learning for self-sufficiency rather than for life enrichment had some interesting inferences for leisure specialists and music educators, but I feel strongly, that you, as individuals and as a group, can still contribute to their orchestration as they describe four kinds of education that conference participants delineated as essential for self-sufficiency in adulthood.

1. Surviving - learning for economic sufficiency
2. Coping - learning for practical life skills
3. Giving - learning for community contribution, and
4. Growing - learning for becoming a fuller human being. (#1)

Certainly, you can see yourselves as an integral part of the last three arenas, if not the first. The rewards and satisfaction of active or passive participation in the joys of music can crosscut the practical, the social, the psychological or the aesthetic.

Yoshiko Nomura and the Japanese housewives who, in 1963, founded a private, educational volunteer group called the Lifelong Integrated Education Center came up with a differently worded but somewhat similar overview of life long learning. They also outlined types of education but described them on a continuum of what had been to what should be.

1. From one-sided education to education of the whole person
2. From education of knowledge to education of wisdom
3. From education of limited duration to education for eternity. (#2, p. 9)

The implications for needed changes in our philosophy, our delivery systems, and our financial support are readily apparent.

Bob Dylan sang, "The times they are a changing." Change is perhaps the only constant - so why make a big deal about the changing needs of our society, educational or otherwise. Change, any change, is traumatic. It takes us out of our comfort zones and demands adjustment. (Theme song) The speed of changes around us today is socially, physically, and psychologically disruptive. It keeps us personally and professionally off balance. But that same disequilibrium, in my judgment, gives educators from all disciplines, challenges and opportunities undreamed of 50 years ago. Those challenges -- that kind of responsibility to help shape a different future for those whose lives we touch -- directly or indirectly -- are both exciting and frightening.

The rapid pace of scientific technology has so shrunk time and space, changes in knowledge have evolved so speedily, that many of our school texts are out of date before they are published. The image of the student as a glass to be filled with knowledge in the formal school environment has given way to the concept that each person, in or out of school, is a fine, tallow candle to be lighted by a variety of mentors in a variety of environments.

The past is prologue to the future, so let's take a quick look at the radical changes which the Industrial Revolution posed. If you read Alvin Toffler's Third Wave (#4, p. 76), he characterizes this period in our history with a set of six guiding principles which broke society into thousands of parts which then acted and interacted.

1. Standardization for efficiency - the assembly line focus for weights, measures, education and sometimes ideas.

2. Specialization which set the music educator apart from the classroom teacher and the community and drove language and turf wedges. How many of your classroom teachers "take a break" when you arrive to teach your specialization?

3. Synchronization which engineered the time and energies of producers and

consumers to mesh with production needs.

4. Concentration which amassed populations and resources into conveniently placed packages of workers, prisoners, the aged, adult educators, recreators, etc.

5. Maximization which worshipped quantity at the expense of quality.

6. Centralization which gave politics, business, industry and education a power hierarchy.

I've paraphrased Toffler, but these are some of the guiding principles which got us into status quo. Can we now ponder some predicted changes and project their possible challenge for those who are interested in true life-long learning? Let's look at four.

1. Population. First, we are going to be working with a different population. Explosion and implosion of populations are pertinent, of course. We'll have more persons with more leisure in concentrated densities. The numbers are impressive, but let's look at the mix.

a. The combination of elongated life expectancy, advanced medical technology, and the campaign for zero population growth has skewed the population toward the upper end of the age spectrum. There are more older Americans with better health and with more leisure. The number of Americans under 20 years of age will fall below 20 percent by the year 2000. (#5, p. 47) The fastest growing segment is the high risk (over 85 years) group.

b. Blacks are increasing in proportion to whites.

c. Medical technology has prolonged the life of the handicapped and provided greater capabilities of mobility. We have more handicapped with greater capabilities of mobility. We have more handicapped with greater expectations from us for every human service.

d. Females continue to outlive males by some 4-6 years. If you think Title IX rocked the boat, wait for future shock from aged women. Can you focus

on the 80 year old Gloria Steinem? Maggie Kuhn and the Gray Panthers may yet make Ralph Nader look like a novice. (Gray Panthers-Geriatric Joggers)

e. The total population is better educated with more sophisticated expectations, yet we have large segments who still are illiterate and whose ears are untuned to Bach, Bacharach, or boogie.

f. One fifth of the population lives alone. I doubt that that will continue. Already we are seeing congregate housing alternatives which will affect all of our services.

g. Future compulsory birth control or cloning may further stratify our target populations. Will you accept government control of your capabilities to have offspring? If we clone, how many Mary Hoffmans or Charles Leonhards can we accommodate?

h. We have evolved subcultures of teens, aged, handicapped, gays, ethnic groups and social misfits with which we must deal and whose learning needs we must serve.

2. Family. From the extended family which played the dual role of producer and consumer in years past we now have situations in which:

a. Production has moved out of the home and segregated the family.

b. The child no longer knows what is involved in his parent's work and the peaceful scene of the family gathered around the piano is all but forgotten.

c. Social institutions have absorbed education, religion, family care, shelter, and recreation responsibilities of the traditional family.

d. Divorce rates increase the single parent homes and remarriage rates increase the possibility of dual family living arrangements.

e. Homosexuals demand acceptance of living arrangements and marriage
VOWS.

f. Communal families for a variety of ages arise out of economic as well as passionate relationships. What can we do about intergenerational programs? Music knows no age categories.

3. Work, Time, and Leisure

All of the factors about which we are concerned in lifelong learning intersect and interface but none more closely than do work, time, and leisure.

We've come from the rhythm of the seasons for work in the agricultural environment when milking time conditioned how far you could travel, (udder frustration) to what de Grazia called "the tyranny of the clock" in the industrial world. Centralization and synchronization demanded that we "be on time." If you don't believe time philosophies and the goodness of punctuality have changed, try getting a teenager to a meal on time when he knows the microwave will readily reheat the repast to his taste.

We may move to a different concept of time in the post industrial world as the worker may find an environment in which he may choose both his work time and his work space. Toffler moves from flextime and sabbatical vacations to the "electronic cottage" where most jobs will be performed by computer at home. Husband and wife may work half shifts of the same job. Think of the revisions we'll have to make in hiring policies. The children will be apprenticed in spite of Child Labor Laws. Community stability may be restored since a job change will mean not transfer to another city but simply to another computer system in what is described as "the electronic cottage."

Leisure then may come in more usable blocks of time, possibly on a 24 hour basis or a half year or two years at a time. The lines between leisure and work may become even more eroded as workers demand only those jobs which will afford creative outlets and personal satisfactions. And we may be compelled to use the computer for stimulation and motivation as well as data processing.

We may yet come to a different life pattern which Fred Best (#7, p. 3) describes as cyclical, not linear. Instead of the present education, work, and leisure life progression, it is quite possible that we might alternate education, vacation, and work units. The idea is not new. Eric Hoffer at the NRPA conference years ago wanted to assign a complete state to which one could retreat at any time of life when he felt the need for education. Would that state then be a leisure state? Would time then be viewed as total lifespan, not hours, or days? Then comes a philosophical and practical question. How long are you willing to work for how much, to do what in your leisure? Is leisure integral to your value system or do you still make work value excuses for your weekend, vacation, or coffee break?

4. Mobility. We used to worry about mobility which produced a lack of permanence as ease of travel and job changes erased neighborhoods seemingly overnight. Can we readjust to the needs of populations who, because of energy shortages, or work flexibility choose to stay in the same location for long periods? Can you help make life satisfying for them?

Those then are some of the challenges which face us. Let's then see how in journalistic style we can explore the who, what, why, when, where and how of life-long learning opportunities in light of those conditions.

To set the stage, please imagine with me a scale - the kind that blind Justice holds. The vertical axis - Justice herself - represents your life cycle from birth to death. In her right hand scale is you, or me - the individual. In her left hand, she holds the circumstantial environment - human, natural, material with which the individual interacts at any given time. The responsibility of society as a whole is to keep that horizontal axis in integrated balance throughout the life span - not a perfect balance, for then we have inertia, but a dynamic balance.

Now let's take our journalistic W's.

Who - About whom are we talking? What's our target population? In my judgment, aging is a developmental process and we have to start with pre-schoolers, end with the retirees, and touch bases in every age, economic, cultural, or social entity in between. The first caution is not to stereotype their interests or their capabilities. I'd like to suggest, however, that our population of most concern right now are the young adults, the middle-aged housewife, and the retiree. Our population is certainly concentrating at the upper end of the age spectrum and we must react to that bulge, but we must also look to the needs of the displaced homemaker, the unemployed male, and the housewife who suffers from what medicine has termed "empty-nest syndrome." (Bill Brown)

The second Who - is who provides the learning opportunities? Here's a place where we get into trouble. Public and private educational institutions, social agencies, government, industry, business, adult educators, community educators, recreators, musicians, teachers, business executives are all involved. The Alaskan pipeline of federal funding goodies has created battlegrounds as community education project directors fought for turf with adult educators and park and recreation professionals who were seemingly all geared to meet similar goals.

Who can make things happen in terms of true life-long learning? You can - whoever you are. A group of volunteer housewives in Japan, as I told you, initiated what has now become a prestigious Lifelong Integrated Education Center.

My point here is -- let's stop being spastic about pre-conceived notions of who can be a teacher. The foster grandparent with a second grade education teaches knitting or nature lore to attentive first graders or to college freshmen with mutual rewards. The college math professor learns how to sail from a high school dropout. The television commentator motivates for involvement with the art museum.

Adult educators, libraries, park and recreation departments, universities have developed talent exchange programs on individual and group bases. Sam will teach you how to groom your dog properly if you'll teach him how to report his income to the ever watchful IRS.

Handicapped, senior citizens, housewives with the so-called empty-nest syndrome are prime targets for both teacher and student roles. Educator Pestalozzi long ago said "living educates." We sometimes forget that experience is an excellent teacher, (the only one that gives the test first and the lesson afterward), as we seek credentials for teaching life skills.

What - The content of life-long learning is as varied as the needs of people. Life-long learning cannot simply be an extension of formal schooling. We too often do not do needs assessment as we institute learning opportunities. Death and dying seminars may be the "in" thing but perhaps your population is more attuned to "Cooking for one" offerings. Learning sign language or Braille reading may be less important than lessons on handling finance, a saxophone or a canoe. Sometimes the learning experience has nothing at all to do with skill or knowledge but with experimental ventures which foster attitude changes. The easel on which to paint learning opportunities is restricted only by your own imagination and motivation.

When we consider the what - please also consider that within each choice, we need a continuum of opportunity. In music, we have so many Mr. In Betweens, yet we seem to offer lots of shepherd pipe experiences on one end of the scale and fine orchestras at the other end. What do I do with my saxophone and my mediocre talent after I leave the high school band? I'm a Mr. In Between.

Where - Already we have Learn and Shop in shopping centers, art in the parks, nature center seminars, physical fitness mobile units, free university on college

campuses. The profession of education itself has become less restrictive in geographic locations, institutional regimens, and age limitations. Camps, industrial sites, community centers, voluntary agencies, libraries, churches, parks and schools open their doors at night, during vacations, or within business hours to accommodate learning needs.

The location for life-long learning is important. Some older people who have little formal education will not come back to a college campus for Elderhostel or to the high school for CPR classes. The camp site or nature center often lends itself to broad experience as the natural environment provides inspiration for what Dr. Martin Marty calls, "uprooting to reroot."

The library or the shopping center often provides a "one-stop" opportunity for learning. The television or radio set can invade the home to program for extending knowledge, skill, or appreciation plus motivation for participation in offerings at other locations.

The bookmobiles which have toured rural and inner city environments for years are now being expanded to fitness, hobby, and performing arts mobiles which take the program opportunities to a rural Grange building or to a blocked off street in the inner city.

The nursing homes, prisons, Sun Cities, and mobile home parks give "captive audience" opportunities for exploring learning interests and needs. Music can free them in many ways.

When - Too often we limit opportunities for learning by being too narrow in our temporal frames. It's true we have Weekend Colleges, vacation Bible schools, night classes and after school programs, but look around.

The young auto worker on the swing shift has few learning opportunities from 1 to 6 AM except at the all night bar.

The aged man who is an early morning riser doesn't want to wait for your

evening music appreciation class. Crime on the streets may deter him from the most exciting night offering.

Weekends and holidays are "bare" spots in the life of anyone who lives alone. How often do we plan our leisure - learning - living programs so that they will not interfere with our own precious free time?

The time for learning to live fully must infiltrate the formal education system. In crucial financial pinches we are again reverting to the concept that opportunities for experiencing music, art, drama, and sports are secondary to the important "life skills" of the so-called "basics." Watch the Washington cuts. I submit that if we are truly to live all of our lives, leisure education must be a priority in the school curriculum. When I say leisure education, I am using the term in its broadest sense which encompasses:

1. a development of a philosophical attitude that respects the contribution of leisure choices to physical, social, and psychological well being;
2. the development of skills and appreciations which allow the individual to experience the performing arts, the adventure of outdoor living, or the intricacies of literature or physical activities.

But what about pre-retirement education? We must, because of past deficiencies, start in a variety of places and at a variety of ages. Elementary, junior and senior high schools are not too early to alert people to the intricacies and challenges of the aging process. (Teen nutrition) But for those who got no advance information, start pre-retirement education at any age. We spend years educating for making a living. What makes us think that we can by osmosis or some other mysterious channel absorb the learning that will allow us to make a life?

How - How do we achieve a better, broader spectrum for life-long learning.

We're really talking about a three-pronged thrust to attain that goal.

1. We need to foster a more positive attitude on the part of all society on the meaning and worth of those learning-living experiences in which we choose to participate outside of our compulsory work or school demands. Until we, with sophisticated, responsible research, prove the value of such participation to individual and societal welfare, life-long learning will be less than prestigious, whoever supplies it. Each of us needs to expand our target population to those all along the age continuum.

2. We need to develop early in life, through every available channel, skills and appreciations which will be long lasting whether they enhance our career or our leisure choices. How can I know the beauty of an opera if no one introduces one to its magic?

3. We need to be participating members of a democratic community when issues surface which impact our capabilities of getting or giving educational experiences. I'm talking about transportation, funding, crime. The 1981 White House Conference original eight categories of issues, for instance, did not include either education or leisure. Does that arouse your dander? It does mine.

4. We need to make a friend of technology - the radio, television, home console computers for home study courses.

5. We need to get together as professions, as agencies, as sexes, as generations to cooperate and coordinate efforts, identify gaps, and eliminate overlaps. I heard on TV this morning that the drug traffic business is 70 billion. That's an indictment of how well we are doing in life long learning.

Can we together implement and interpret a diversified cafeteria of offerings which will stimulate physical activity, satisfy basic psychological needs; explore individual and social identity; provide real involvement in life's issues or escape from stress, if needed; encourage intellectual activity; afford self-expression

and self-realization--in short, create physical, social, and psychological environments in which we, whatever our ages, our creative ability, our formal education, or our socio-economic or cultural status can reach our human potential as individuals and as a society.

More than a century ago, Thoreau astutely observed, "Americans know more about how to make a living than how to live." From today's temporal vantage point, he might be even more caustic in his criticism. Man lives vertically from birth to death. We cannot change that life span, although we may through our actions shorten or extend the intervening years. Man also lives horizontally in constant interaction with other human, natural, and material environments. It is in that horizontal interaction that life-long learning has its place to help us to live fully with appreciation for a child's touch, a gentle breeze, a Beethoven symphony; to live wisely because we understand the developmental aspects of our own human aging, the finiteness of our natural resources, and the fibers of our social environment.

If we achieve that ideal

- education for wisdom, not knowledge
- education for life, as well as living,

perhaps we can all look back at the ripe old age of 80 to say with some pride

"Long long ago

When life was spring

I thought life was a lovely thing

And now with snow on dale and hill

I think so still."

The Lifelong Learning Act gave us legislative support for a start toward our goals but I see little in state legislation or the 1981 White House Conference issues which puts lifelong learning in the front pew.

And so in closing I send to you this card which reads

"Dear Music Educators - my parting wish for you, the best that one can offer -- I hope you live all your life."

P.S. I hope your effort in encouraging participation in music will help me, too, to live my life to the fullest.

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